



Office of Representative Heath Shuler

Representing North Carolina's Eleventh Congressional District

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Congressman Heath Shuler Joins w/ HHS Secretary to Encourage Senior Citizens to take Advantage of Medicare's Preventive Care

Washington, D.C. – Representative Heath Shuler joined with Secretary of Health and Human Services Michael Leavitt and other members of Congress to highlight “A Healthier US Starts Here” campaign. The campaign aims to build awareness of tests and screenings available to American seniors under Medicare.

“One of the easiest and most effective things we can do to save lives and lower the cost of health care for all Americans is to take more preventive health measures. I am excited that we will be reaching out to our seniors and educating them about the steps they can take to improve their lives,” said Rep. Shuler. “By visiting the doctor regularly, receiving vaccines, or utilizing test and screenings, we can save lives.”

Medicare already covers many important screenings and other preventive benefits to help people with Medicare live healthier and more active lives. For example less than half of people with Medicare report having their blood sugar tested in the past year to screen for diabetes, and 15% have not had an annual cholesterol test. Additionally, each year 200,000 people are hospitalized with the flu and 36,000 people die. Flu shots are free to seniors on Medicare, yet only 65% of beneficiaries take advantage of the vaccine.

As part of the *Healthier US Starts Here* initiative, Medicare and its partners will raise awareness of the importance of preventing chronic disease and illness like heart disease, cancer, stroke and diabetes.

The Medicare tour bus, which will be in North Carolina at the end of May, will visit each of the 48 continental states over the course of this spring and summer, bringing spokespersons to work with community partners, city and State leaders, and disease prevention advocates involved in these initiatives. People with Medicare will be asked to take action, talk to their healthcare providers and visit www.mymedicare.gov to learn more about preventive services they are eligible to receive and access tools to help manage their healthcare.

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